

November 20, 2006

FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF GENERAL COUNSEL

Office of the General Counsel  
Federal Election Commission  
999 E Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20463

2006 NOV 24 A 9:13

**Re: MUR 5863**

Dear Sir/Madam:

My name is John Lovaas. I am responding to the letter dated October 30, 2006 addressed to me from Mr. Jeff S. Jordan of the Commission. I received the letter on November 3, 2006 when I visited the Comcast Studio to tape a segment of a public access television program.

First, let me identify myself. I am private citizen, a retired federal employee, who voluntarily organizes and hosts a program--Reston Impact-- on Comcast public access community television in Reston. I am neither employed by Comcast, nor associated with Comcast in any way other than occasionally using its studio for the Reston Impact program.

I have hosted the Reston Impact program for six years and have conducted candidate forums on at least ten occasions. This fall, as part of the program, I organized a Candidates Forum which was held at the studios of Comcast Channel 28, the public access TV station in Reston, on October 8, 2006. The Forum consisted of statements by the candidates for Congress from Virginia's 8<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and their responses to questions from community newspaper journalists. I served as the host of the program and invited a member of the Reston Citizens Association to participate as co-host.

The incumbent, Democratic Congressman James Moran, and Republican challenger Thomas O'Donoghue were invited to participate in this Forum. I did not invite Mr. Hurysz, who ran as an Independent candidate for the 8<sup>th</sup> District seat.

In recent years, it has been my practice as Forum organizer and host to invite all candidates for public office to one-on-one appearances on my Reston Impact program and, following this, to invite those who appeared in a one-

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on-one interview to participate in the Candidates Forum. Accordingly, Mr. Hurysz was invited to participate in such a one-on-one interview with me, the Forum host, to be introduced to the community and outline his reasons for running, his platform and policy proposals and to answer questions from the host. While both the Democratic and Republican candidates accepted the invitations and participated in one-on-one interviews, Mr. Hurysz declined to do so. For this reason, I extended invitations to the October 8 Candidates Forum to the Democratic and Republican candidates, but not to Mr. Hurysz.

I would like to note that, in keeping with my commitment to provide an opportunity for the views of all candidates to be heard, as Forum host I extended another invitation to Mr. Hurysz for an individual interview after the October 8 Forum. He rejected this offer as well.

I would also like to note that, in 2004, when Mr. Hurysz was a candidate for the same office, he was invited to, and he chose to, participate in the one-on-one interview, and thereafter he was invited to participate in a Candidates Forum.

I organize and host Candidate Forums as a volunteer—I am neither compensated nor directed by any person or group in providing what I hope is a useful community service. The Forum has a reputation for fairness among all who have participated and, I believe, viewers alike. I do this as a volunteer believing that it is a useful service to the community to be able to see candidates state their positions and answer questions from the press so that residents have a better basis for making their decisions on election day. I seek to do so in a manner which allows the candidates to state their views in opening and closing statements and to field questions from the working press as well as one question each from their opponent. It seems to me very important to structure the forum so that there are not unproductive distractions or disruptions which could interfere with the viewers' opportunity to gain a full, clear appreciation for candidates' positions.

The video DVD of the October 8<sup>th</sup> Forum is available from Comcast should the Commission wish to assess its fairness to two candidates with sharply divergent views on the direction of public policy. At the close of the Forum, the Republican and Democrat both expressed (before the rolling TV

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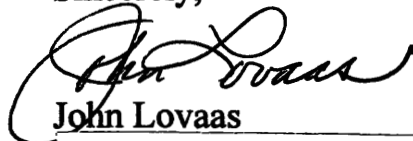
cameras) their special appreciation to me, the co-host and the journalist panel for "the best, most substantive debate we have had". Their statement can be seen on the DVD. Obviously, both candidates can be asked directly about the fairness of the Forum and the process which led to it, including their individual interviews. Because of my own association with the Democratic Party—I was the local chairman for a little over a year in the late 1990s—it might be most useful to inquire of the Republican candidate about the process and the Forum.

While there are a number of misstatements of fact in Mr. Hury's complaint, let me for the moment correct only the one having to do with my "legal address". I have never had a "legal address" or any other kind of address at Comcast. I have only two addresses--my home address (as shown below) and my work address at the Connection Newspapers in McLean, VA. Otherwise, I have chosen for the present to limit the information provided above to the facts which hopefully are most responsive to the Commission's inquiry.

For the future, I believe it best that I put in writing the criteria that will be used in extending invitations to the forums. I intend to do this over the next few months. If the Commission has any suggestions or guidance in this respect, I would very much appreciate it.

If you have any questions or if I can be of further assistance, you can reach me by phone at: [redacted] or 703-917-6405 (w).

Sincerely,

  
John Lovaas

[redacted]  
Reston, VA 20190

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